

Local yokel

(n.) a country folk living in a quaint neighborhood community

West
Stockbridge
February
2024



SERVING OUR COMMUNITY SINCE 2005

Sumac photo by Emily Weiland

Thank You, Colleen!

By John Parker

Colleen Wich, West Stockbridge postmaster for 24 years, retires at the end of this month. Colleen has worked for the U.S. Postal Service for 37 years, including stints in Stockbridge, Sheffield, and Southfield. Reflecting on her time here, she says she found the customers “very welcoming” and “a nice mix of locals and snowbirds.” Colleen looks forward to focusing on bookkeeping for her plumber husband, her grandchildren, and her pets. Best wishes for a happy retirement, Colleen, and thanks so much for your help with all things postal in West Stockbridge!



Photo by John Parker

Acclaimed BEAVERLAND author Leila Philip
kicks off a new series of nature talks
for the West Stockbridge Historical Society

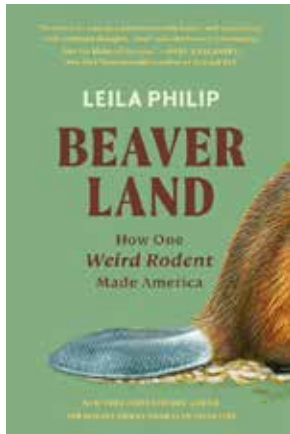


Photo: John Earle

Friday, February 16th at 7 p.m. at the Old Town Hall
9 Main Street, West Stockbridge

The book the *New York Times* calls “inspiring” and the *Wall Street Journal* says is “full of charm and wonder” is now available in paperback with a new Foreword

**A reception and book signing, courtesy of Shaker Mill Books,
will immediately follow the event**

Co-sponsored by the Friends of the West Stockbridge Library
West Stockbridge Historical Society
weststockbridgehistory.org

February Art Calendar

Guild of Berkshire Artists | BerkshireArtists.org | infoberkshireartists@gmail.com

2/24

February 2 - April 2024, “Woods and Water”, Reception Feb. 24, 6:15-7:30pm. Art show at the Colonial Theatre. Featuring 9 works from local artists. See Website for hours.

February 9 - 25, “Musings on Nature”. Reception Feb 9th, 5-8pm. Art show at the Anna and Fredrick Henry Leonhardt Galleries at the Berkshire Botanical Garden, Stockbridge, MA.

February 23, Art Book Gathering, 10-11am. Share a favorite book, artist, or process.

February 25, Berkshire Photo Gathering. See web: berkshirephotogathering.com /online-meetings

February 27, Meet the Artist, 3pm. Thom Lipiczky, woodworking and design. Link to watch to be shared on website.

See www.berkshireartists.org for all the in-person and online events offered by the Guild of Berkshire Artists!



Musings on Nature

Art Show at the
Anna & Fredrick Henry Leonhardt
Galleries
at
Berkshire Botanical Gardens
- Stockbridge, MA -

February 9 - 25

Reception:
February 9, 5-8pm



Select Board Meeting Minutes

[Editor's note: At the town administrator's request, the Select Board minutes here are reprinted verbatim with no editing of text. Official board minutes are available at the West Stockbridge Public Library and on the town website, <https://www.weststockbridge-ma.gov/>. Select Board meetings are on Zoom and may be viewed by clicking on the link in the meeting agenda posted on the town website calendar. Residents can receive email notification of town events and meeting agendas by subscribing at <http://weststockbridgema.virtualltownhall.net/subscriber>].

Select Board Meeting Minutes December 18, 2023

Quorum present: Select Board Members; Kathleen Kerese, Chair, Andrew Krouss, Andrew Potter, and Town Administrator Marie Ryan.

Kathleen opened the meeting at 6 PM.

Approval of Minutes:

Kathleen made a motion, seconded by Andy Krouss, to approve the minutes from October 12, 2023 and December 4, 2023.

All were in favor; minutes approved.

Citizen Speak:

Rich Pfeiffer and Joanna Yurman told the Board that they have formed a concerned citizen group with West Stockbridge and Richmond residents that are affected by the odor coming from Wiseacre Farm. Their group is called the Neighbors Advocating for Fresh Air (NAFA). Rich encouraged the Select Board to make an active effort to hire a professional consultant to review the mitigation plans from Wiseacre Farm.

Richmond Select Board Member, Neal Pilson and his Board are in full support of their concerned residents and would like the West Stockbridge Select Board to resolve the odor issues as quickly as possible.

Appointment of Michael Murray to the Conservation Commission:

Conservation Commission Chair Kathy Korte said that the Commission has a member that has resigned and requested that Michael Murray be appointed to the Commission to take that position.

Andy Potter made a motion, seconded by Kathleen, to appoint Michael Murray as Conservation Commission member.

All were in favor; motion passed.

Fire Department Update: Chief Steve Traver

Chief Traver stated that the Fire Department has been very busy this past year. Last year at this time they had 224 calls and as of today they have had 292. Engine 2 has been out for repairs and he hopes to get that truck back this week.

Steve encouraged the Board to include him in any discussions involving a possible shared fire department with Lee and Stockbridge.

Annual Entertainment License for Heirloom Lodge:

Andy Potter made note that this Entertainment License states a location in the dining room so this would be an indoor only license.

Andy Potter made a motion, seconded by Andy Krouss, to approve an Annual Entertainment License for Heirloom Lodge.

All were in favor; motion passed.

Dissolve Shared Human Resource Manager Agreement:

Marie Ryan, Town Administrator explained that the Shared Human Resource Manager, Sophia Beltsos, was hired for 4 hours a week in West Stockbridge. She worked for 6 months this past year in West Stockbridge, establishing an Employee Handbook and Policies and Procedures booklet. She also completed a majority of the job descriptions for the employees as well. Sophia was offered a full-time position in Great Barrington. The Great Barrington Town Manager, Mark Pruhenski, has requested that each of the remaining Towns vote to dissolve the Intermunicipal Agreement (IMA) for the Shared Human Resource Manager.

Andy Potter made a motion, seconded by Kathleen, to dissolve the IMA for the Shared Human Resource Manager.

All were in favor; motion passed.

Municipal Broadband Institute (MBI) Update: Andy Krouss

Andy Krouss noted that Robert Ireland, Berkshire Regional Planning Representative for MBI to West Stockbridge, has been busy researching all addresses in West Stockbridge that are currently not served by broadband or are unserved, where the internet speeds are inadequate.

Andy encouraged all residents to contact Robert if they have any issues with their internet. The more information Robert receives, the stronger the case he can make to the state on our behalf to receive grant money and assistance for improved broadband in the area.

Community Preservation Funds for Moscow Road property Development:

Kathleen explained to the Board that the Town received Shared Streets Grant money for a design to develop the Town-owned land on Moscow Road. A few years ago, at the Town's request, Gregori Fateyev, architect and owner of Art Forms Architecture, submitted a design but the development did not go forward at the time. Kathleen would like to ask him to pick up the design work where it had been left off and offer a second direction so that the Town could have an alternative. She would then like to submit these designs in an application for Community Preservation money to get this area developed into a park. She will include the Parks and Recreation Committee as well. Andy and Andy were both in agreement to proceed. The Board will review in early January any plans that are given to Kathleen.

Select Board Speak:

Andy Potter informed the board that he is working on several articles for the Annual Town Meeting warrant. These articles will help with taxes for seniors and low-income families in Town.

Kathleen discussed GE's proposed transportation route of PCB waste from the Housatonic River cleanup. The proposed truck

...continued on page 6



Thank You,
West Stockbridge!

Santa's Wish List Donations

Our annual appeal for donations to West Stockbridge organizations appeared in our December issue. This year, the total received was \$9,945. That's almost \$10,000 more in funding to local organizations than would otherwise be available!

We thank all those who gave so generously to these important community groups that work very hard to make West Stockbridge such a special place to live. Here are the totals by organization:

Friends of the Library	\$1,445
Local Yoke!	\$3,020
Pet Partners	\$150
WS Farmers Market	\$425
WS Fire & Rescue	\$1,150
WS Historical Society	\$2,060
WS Parks & Recreation	\$505
WS Plants and Gardens	\$515
WS Zucchini Festival	\$675

Total: \$9,945

An Invitation to West Stockbridge Veterans and Their Families

Last November, in commemoration of Veterans Day, the *Local Yoke!* began a series of profiles of local veterans to honor their service. We invite West Stockbridge veterans and their families to share their stories. We plan to continue sharing these profiles as they become available. If interested, please contact Renee McCormick at drreemccormick@gmail.com or text her at (914) 629-6314. All it takes is a short conversation to discuss four aspects of your or your family member's service: *why the veteran joined, a memorable event, what lessons the veteran took away, and life after service.* We look forward to hearing from you and telling your story!

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JOSEPH J. BORMOLINI

U.S. Army, 1951–1957

Active Duty in 1955 at Pine Camp,
now Fort Drum, in Watertown, New York
Served in the Reserves in an Ordinance Unit
Rank: Corporal

Note: Joseph’s story is told by his brother, John Bormolini.

What influenced Joseph to join the army?

Knowing Joe, he felt he had an obligation to serve his country as the Korean conflict was raging from 1950 to 1953.


What was a life lesson learned from his time in the service?

At Camp Drum, he continued working in his Ordinance unit and became a cook during the last six months of his deployment. He quickly learned that teamwork is needed to get the job done and that building camaraderie is essential.

Life after the service?

Joe learned a lot as a cook. After leaving the army in 1957, he held several jobs as a cook or chef, most notably for eight years at Eastover in Lenox, Massachusetts.

Joe’s love of cooking was always on display. One of his sidelines was making and distributing spaghetti sauce and pizzas for the local community. He installed large ovens in the newly built garage at the house where he grew up. As is often said, “Timing is everything.” Had Joe known the pizza takeout business would skyrocket, today we might be ordering “Papa Joes” instead of “Papa Johns!”



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...continued from page 3

routes to transport the waste from cleanup points along the River include passage through West Stockbridge to New York State. Rail is not currently being proposed as a viable method of transporting the toxic materials. The Board expressed concern about PCBs coming through West Stockbridge, either on the Turnpike or local roads. Kathleen will keep the Board updated as new information on this issue becomes available.

Kathleen made a motion, seconded by Andy Krouss, to adjourn at 6:53 PM.

Kathleen and Andy Krouss were in favor; meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Marie Y. Ryan

Marie Y. Ryan

Town Administrator

Select Board Meeting Minutes

January 2, 2024

Quorum present: Select Board Members; Kathleen Keresey, Chair, Andrew Krouss, Andrew Potter, and Town Administrator Marie Ryan.

Kathleen opened the meeting at 6 PM.

Approval of Minutes:

Kathleen stated the December 18, 2023 minutes will be approved at the next meeting.

Kathleen explained the protocol for citizens in attendance who would like to speak during the meeting. No person is allowed to speak until recognized by the Chair. She would like this process followed so that no one is speaking out of turn or interrupting the Board members. Meetings are for the Select Board to do the

...continued on page 7

Local Yokel	Pick up a copy FREE AS ALWAYS at these locations around town:		Berkshire Bank Charles H. Baldwin & Sons Flourish Market Gallery on Main Library Public Market Town Offices	Or you can choose to have the <i>Local Yokel</i> mailed to you for a minimum annual contribution of \$25.
	Outdoor distribution boxes: Visitors' Booth, Baldwin Hardware, Shaker Mill Books, The Floor Store, & the Transfer Station			

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...continued from page 6

business of the Town, although she will welcome comments, but the procedures and order should be followed.

Citizen Speak:

Curt Wilton, Moscow Road resident, requested that the Board not reverse their original vote for the hours noted on the Entertainment License for TurnPark to end amplified music at 9 PM.

At this time, Kathleen informed the Board that Jared Gelormino, TurnPark Manager, has requested a postponement of discussion of the agenda item for this meeting in regard to changes to the TurnPark Entertainment License for 2024.

Mitchell Greenwald, Great Barrington Road resident, said the following Entertainment Licenses were approved in the past to TurnPark:

2021 1-Day event

2023 Annual License for 3 days/week 1PM - 10PM

2024 Annual License for Monday through Saturday from 5 PM - 9 PM

Mitch noted the TurnPark was required to get a Special Permit when they opened, which they did. Their Special Permit was approved in 2015 for a museum and restaurant. He suggested that TurnPark may be required to get a new Special Permit to include the type of events they now hold on the property.

Barry Girdler, Oak Street resident, spoke in regard to the agenda item for Michael Bolognino requesting a one-day Liquor License. Barry stated that he believes Michael would need a Special event permit to hold this ticketed function at their home.

Michael Bolognino – One-Day Liquor License:

Michael stated that he and his husband, Nick, intend on hosting a Fancy Fest Dinner Party on February 17, 2024. All food is prepared off-site and brought in. He has worked with the Board of Health Agent, Earl Moffatt and received a Special Event Permit from him. They plan on hosting up to 60 people. In regards to Barry Girdler's concerns, Andy Potter stated that Marie, Town Administrator, had asked the Building Inspector and Zoning Enforcement Officer, Brian DuVal, if he felt the event could be held at the home. Brian's opinion was that it was not a violation, but Andy asked for Brian to confirm.

Andy Potter stated that Kathleen was an abutter to Michael's property. Kathleen then stated that she felt she could be fair and impartial while voting on this matter.

Andy Potter made a motion, seconded by Kathleen, to approve the One-Day Liquor License contingent upon Michael clarifying the approval by the Building Inspector.

All were in favor, motion approved.

Property Tax Relief for Seniors – Sheila Thunfors:

Resident Sheila Thunfors and several other residents formed a small group to discuss concerns for the financial burden on senior residents due to property taxes. The group has spent many hours doing research on what exemptions are available to residents to help with some tax relief. The group primarily worked on gather-

ing information on Massachusetts General Law (MGL) Chapter 41C and 41C ½. These laws could be adopted at Town Meeting and allow the senior residents to pay less in property taxes. There is an income requirement and an application must be submitted to the Assessors' office within the time allotted for this. Sheila stated that the group felt this could give relief to up to 60 households and would only add approximately an additional \$32 to all other households' tax bills in Town.

Sheila informed the Board that their group will be submitting a citizen petition to be on the Town Warrant for the Annual Town Meeting. They will request that the Town adopt MGL chapter 4C ½ and also include an article to change MGL Chapter 41C, contingent upon MGL 41C ½ not passing.

The Board thanked them for all their hard work and suggested that they allow the Board to place that articles on the warrant. The group agreed.

The Board would like to work with them on this issue and hold a special meeting with the Assessors to review and go over all of this information. Marie will schedule a meeting for everyone in the near future.

Short Term Rental Impact Fees – Andy Potter:

Andy Potter wanted to bring up the subject of Short-Term Rental Impact Fees to the attention of the Board. These fees could go directly into the Affordable Housing Trust Fund. Dana Bixby, Planning Board Chair, stated that the Planning Board is reviewing this subject and may request to have a zoning change voted on at a Town Meeting. The Planning Board also suggested that the Select Board create a bylaw change with administrative regulations and the two articles would work together.

Current Rooms Rate Tax – Andy Potter:

Andy stated that West Stockbridge currently has a rooms rate tax of 4% which has been in place since 1994. He would like an article to increase this to 6% for the Annual Town Meeting.

Select Board Speak:

Andy Krouss thanked everyone in attendance for being civil and polite throughout the meeting.

Andy Potter echoed Andy Krouss and hopes that this will continue throughout the budget season as well.

Kathleen stated that she will be attending a meeting tomorrow about the proposed removal of toxic waste from the Housatonic River. She will keep the Board updated as new information becomes available.

Kathleen made a motion, seconded by Andy Potter, to adjourn at 7:11 PM.

All were in favor, meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Marie Y. Ryan
Marie Y. Ryan
Town Administrator

The West Stockbridge Public Library: A Wonderful Community Resource

By Anne Lesser

Since 2007, the West Stockbridge Public Library (WSPL), originally crammed into the Old Town Hall for many years, now welcomes patrons in a bright and airy space in the Town Offices. It offers both print and digital resources for everyone plus computers for public use. Comfortable seating, new books and DVDs to explore, a reading porch in the warmer months, along with the helpful assistance of the staff, all make a visit to the library a real pleasure.

Director Rachel Alter, along with colleagues Vicky Cooper and Sarah Schaeffer, and high school student Francesca Stanmeyer, recently shared how they came to library work, some of their favorite books, what they most enjoy about the library, and hopes for the WSPL in the new year.



Library Director Rachel Alter

Rachel: My work as a Montessori teacher led to a degree as a reading and language teacher. A school library job was my next step since it combined reading and education. Library work was so interesting that it became my focus from then on, including getting a second graduate degree.

Vicky: I have always loved books and reading. My first word was “book”! After majoring in art history, I worked at an architecture library at MIT, inspiring me to earn a master’s degree in library science. When I returned to the Berkshires, I began working at the West Stockbridge Library, then on Main Street. I also worked in libraries in neighboring towns before finally coming full circle back to West Stockbridge. I love children, animals, and beautifully illustrated children’s books, a way to incorporate all my passions in one career.

Sarah: I majored in accounting at the University of Notre Dame. I then spent many years at the corporate offices of Barnes & Noble as the manager of financial reporting.

Seeing how much money was spent on books made me realize how important libraries are for people who cannot purchase all the books they want to read. It inspired me to earn a master’s degree in library and information science.

Francesca: I have always had an interest in and appreciation for books and literature, especially going into high school and being asked to read some of the classics. Surrounded by books and having the opportunity to help others access information is fulfilling and means connecting positively with people from the community.

Favorite Books

Rachel: My favorite author is the great Louise Erdrich, whose stories are intense and unforgettable. Three outstanding novels are *LaRose*, *The Painted Drum*, and *The Round House*. I also want to mention Irish author Claire Keegan, who wrote *Foster*, a short novel about a neglected girl who spends a summer at her aunt and uncle’s home and how that experience affects all three of them. *The Quiet Girl* is a movie based on that poignant story.

Vicky: Three books I read recently and loved are *Violeta* by Isabel Allende, *The Covenant of Water* by Abraham Verghese,

...continued on page 9



Assistant Librarian Vicky Cooper



Assistant Librarian Sarah Schaeffer

and *Rough Sleepers* by Tracy Kidder. *Violeta* inspired me to embrace my “crazy” family and take my 21-year-old grandson under my wing. *The Covenant of Water* is a family saga through several generations in India. *Rough Sleepers* is the story of Dr. Jim O’Connell, who devoted his life to caring for the homeless in Boston.

Sarah: I love anything by Alice Hoffman. And *A Gentleman in Moscow* (Amor Towles), *Suite Française* (Irene Nemirovsky), *The Priory* (Dorothy Whipple), *The Paris Wife* (Paula McLain), *I Capture the Castle* (Dodie Smith), *The Marriage Portrait* (Maggie Farrell), and *A Moveable Feast* (Ernest Hemingway) are just a few more favorites. I almost can’t remember why I loved each of them so much, but books affect you in profound ways. Despite being filled with words, the reasons why we were so moved may not always be easily verbalized.

Francesca: My two favorite books are currently *Jane Eyre* by Charlotte Bronte and *Anna Karenina* by Leo Tolstoy. *Jane Eyre* is a personal favorite because of the memorable characters and thought-provoking themes on identity, social norms of the time, and psychological realism. *Anna Karenina*, although long, is another favorite because of the complex characters, in-depth insights into human nature, and the unique story that Tolstoy articulates.

WSPL Offerings and Hopes for 2024

Rachel: People feel a joyful community spirit when they come to WSPL.

One afternoon two local residents met at the circulation desk and spoke to each other in Italian after they discovered one of them grew up speaking Italian at home and one was from Italy. My hope for 2024 is for more people to enjoy the library as much as our wonderful group of regular users do. We are glad to help set up online accounts for borrowing audiobooks, eBooks, movies, and even popular magazines online.

Vicky: I appreciate the personalized service we offer our patrons. I love my outreach story time at St. Paul’s Children’s Center. Special events, such as Mary Pope Osborne’s visit, the “Birds of Prey” presentation, and the therapy animals program, were very successful. I also enjoy creating outdoor StoryWalks for children. I would welcome more cooperative programs with organizations like the West Stockbridge Historical Society, the schools, and local businesses like Shaker Mill Books.

Visitors may not know about the LIBBY app. Users can listen to and/or read books on any device—great for long car rides! We also have a big collection of large-print books and DVDs of older and recent movies. Thanks to interlibrary loan, we can order just about any book and it’s delivered here. In addition to computers, we have several printers and hot spots that patrons can borrow for Internet access.

Sarah: I enjoy speaking to patrons about books and life! I also really appreciate the people who stop at the library en route to other destinations, to sit and read for a spell or do some work. I hope to see more young people doing their homework at the library! We have many resources available at the library. If you don’t find it here or on C/W MARS (catalog of materials across Massachusetts), the search does not have to end there! With ComCat and WorldCat, we have so many options.

Francesca: I enjoy the connections made with everyone who comes to the library. It is nice to meet people in the community, and learning about who people are can lead to a new familiarity.

The library is now open every day of the week except Sunday, so stop by sometime!

Editor’s note: Responses were lightly edited and abridged as needed.

Photos by John Parker



Volunteer Francesca Stanmeyer



*West Stockbridge Chamber
Players artistic director
Catherine Hudgins*



*WSHS president Bob Salerno welcomes sold-out crowd at
the Congregational Church*

Comfort and Joy Filled the Air at the West Stockbridge Chamber Players Winter Benefit Concert

By Liza Bennett

“Cathy felt that everyone could use a hug this year,” said Daniel Getz, the West Stockbridge Chamber Players’ violist as he introduced the Brahms Viola Sonata in F minor, Op. 120, No. 1, to a sold-out audience on the evening of December 28. It was characteristic of Cathy, otherwise known as the West Stockbridge Chamber Players’ artistic director Catherine Hudgins, to think of what her audience would like and need. Her programs are unfailingly eclectic, inspired, and attuned to both the past and the moment. The viola sonata—especially the deeply moving *Andante un poco adagio* movement—turned out to be just the warm musical embrace Hudgins had prescribed.

The concert, performed in the intimate and festively decorated West Stockbridge Village Congregational Church, featured three of the Chamber Players beloved longtime members: clarinetist Catherine Hudgins, violinist Sheila Fiekowsky, and violist Daniel Getz, along with newcomer pianist Brian Locke. Brahms’ *Scherzo de la Sonate FAE*, written early in his career, started the program, followed by his sonata.

After an intermission, Sheila Fiekowsky introduced Beethoven’s *Violin Sonata No. 1 in D major, Op. 12, No. 1*, the first the composer wrote for the piano and violin, dedicated to his teacher Antonio Salieri. “The movie got Salieri all wrong,” Fiekowsky confided. Placing the piece in historical context, Fiekowsky pointed out that it was written in 1798, over 100 years after her violin, a Hieronymus Amati, was built in Cremona, Italy. Fiekowsky, her violin, and Locke on the piano proceeded to offer a soaring performance of the sonata.

Addressing the audience before performing Mozart’s *Trio in E-flat major, K. 498, Kegelstatt*, Hudgins, too, placed the music in historical context: how Mozart composed his trio around the time West Stockbridge was incorporated in 1774, and how Brahms was born in 1883, the same year the West Center Congregational Church was erected. Earlier in the evening, Bob Salerno, president of the West Stockbridge Historical Society, had noted another fact of historic significance: this was the 39th benefit concert that the West Stockbridge Chamber Players had performed in support of the restoration of the West Stockbridge Old Town Hall, a massive undertaking that is now nearing completion.

After the uplifting final piece, the audience met and mingled with the musicians at the lovely nearby home of Constance Eagan, a longtime member and supporter of the West Stockbridge Historical Society.

Photos by John Parker



*Sheila Fiekowsky and Brian Locke offered a
soaring performance of Beethoven’s
Violin Sonata No. 1 in D major*



*Daniel Getz introducing the Brahms Viola Sonata;
Brian Locke at the piano*

West Stockbridge Approved for \$250,000 Grant to Build Town's First Dog Park

Residents are encouraged to get involved, share feedback at February 24 meeting

Last year, a group of West Stockbridge residents volunteered (many in response to a request put to readers of the *Local Yoke!*) to serve on an ad hoc town committee to explore the possibility of building a dog park for the town. A generous grant from a Massachusetts-based foundation could bring their efforts to fruition by 2025, and committee members are hoping local residents will get involved by coming to learn about the project and the proposed park locations at a February 24 gathering.

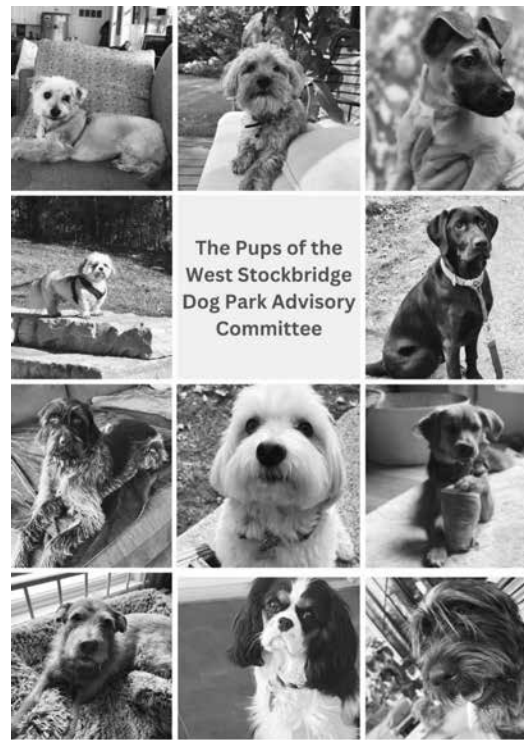
Jana Sax and Michael Bolognino, co-chairs of the committee (elected by the six other members), led the group's efforts to secure the grant from the Boston-based Stanton Foundation (stantonfoundation.org). "We had no time to waste," said Sax. "The grant application was due at the beginning of December, and this is the last year the Stanton Foundation will offer this program to support building dog parks in the state." The grant, which will supply up to \$250,000 to design and build the park in West Stockbridge, has also provided funding for the construction of Pittsfield's new dog park and those in many other Massachusetts towns (e.g., Brewster and Acton). The committee was notified that their grant application had been approved on January 3, 2024.

The committee intends for future financial support for the park's maintenance to come from a nonprofit friends group that will organize fundraising and volunteer support for the new town resource. This model has been successful for other dog parks in the state.

On February 24 at 3 p.m., the committee invites West Stockbridge residents to attend a community forum where the committee will report on its work thus far and seek feedback and suggestions from town residents. The meeting will be held at the West Stockbridge Town Offices.

Contact:

Jana Sax,
Co-Chair, West Stockbridge Dog Park Committee
(617) 388-4481



February History Quiz Question:

This year West Stockbridge will celebrate a major anniversary. It was 250 years ago that we separated from the other Stockbridge. Here's the story: The farmers in the western part of Stockbridge (West Center) wanted to form their own church and retain their taxes. Travel every Sunday to the Stockbridge Mission was neither convenient nor easy, particularly in the winter, yet church attendance was mandatory. Separating seemed to make sense.

Petitioning the General Court in Boston and the governor was a longer process and more complicated than expected. The actual birthday of the town and the circumstance of its formation are unclear. The process had an error that could have had a significant impact on the town. What was going on, and then what happened? What date is our actual birthday?

(Find the answer somewhere in this issue!)



**West Stockbridge
Historical Society**
Incorporated in 1994

When friends, neighbors, or relatives move, downsize, or just clean house, *please* ask them to think of the West Stockbridge Historical Society before they discard any old books, pictures, postcards, letters, or memorabilia of the Town of West Stockbridge. Email info@weststockbridgehistory.org or call (413) 232-4465.



Moving into the New Year

THE GUILD & ART ON MAIN GALLERY

To kick off our many art events scheduled for our 10th anniversary 2024, the Guild of Berkshire Artists is presenting “Musings on Nature,” a juried group show in the Leonhardt Galleries at the Berkshire Botanical Garden. The opening reception is on Friday, February 9, from 5 to 7 pm. The show will run until Sunday, February 25, 2024. Gallery hours are Tuesday through Sunday from 11 am to 3 pm.

In “Musings on Nature,” member artists were challenged to interpret their concept of what nature means to them. Is it colors, textures, the amazing beauty of life in nature? Is it the complexity, as well as the simple beauty, of spring tulips, fall leaves, and sunsets? The artists will tell us what moves them in nature.

Through the years, the Guild’s Plein Air group has met on Thursdays at the Botanical Garden to sketch, paint, and share their interpretations of the natural surroundings. Our experience with the garden’s welcoming hospitality has so enhanced the experience of capturing the natural beauty in each artist’s personal style. Both organizations draw inspiration from the Berkshires, and our missions clearly dovetail and support one another.

The Guild of Berkshire Artists is a nonprofit visual arts organization that supports and promotes its members through education, exhibits, community events, and a member gallery. Art on Main Gallery at 38 Main Street in downtown West Stockbridge has exhibited the work of over 40 member artists in the past two seasons and has more than 20 artists already scheduled to show in 2024. Everyone benefits from the process of curating and presenting their work in a warm, welcoming environment.

Visit the Guild’s website at www.berkshireartists.org.



Carolyn Abrams



Karen Carmean

February Donor Roll Call

- Susan Fisher & Gary Schieneman
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- Ricki Gardner & Will Cavanagh
- Zina Greene
- Nancy Howell
- Catherine & William Hudgins
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Public Transportation Information for West Stockbridge: BRTA and Tri-Town Connector

The Tri-Town Connector is a new transportation service for everyone in the towns of Egremont, Great Barrington, Stockbridge, West Stockbridge, and Monterey. This service is not restricted to seniors. It serves both residents and nonresidents.

Tri-Town Connector

Hours of Operation:

Egremont, Great Barrington, and Stockbridge
6 am–9 pm weekdays • 7:30 am–8 pm weekends

Monterey
8 am–6 pm weekdays • 10 am–4 pm weekends

West Stockbridge
7:30 am–8 pm weekdays • 9 am–7 pm weekends

Just call (413) 591-3826. Tell them where you are and where you want to go. A Tri-Town Connector van will pick you up and take you where you want to go within the five towns served.

Fares (one way): Travel within one town: \$2 • Travel between towns: \$4

Children under 5 ride free when accompanied by a paying adult.

Discounted tickets for 10 one-way rides can be purchased at the Claire Teague Senior Center transportation office, 915 S. Main Street (south of the Big Y supermarket), Great Barrington, weekdays 8 am–4 pm. Tickets may also be purchased on the vans and at local senior centers.

Prices for these discounted tickets are \$15 for travel within one town, a 25% discount, and \$25 for multi-town trips, a 38% discount.

See the Tri-Town Connector website, www.tritown.org, for more information and alerts.

Weekly Workforce Passes are available for residents, providing travel between any of the five communities for \$15/week. This pass provides one daily round trip for 7 consecutive days.

To book a ride, please call (413) 591-3826, Monday-Saturday, 8 am–4 pm.

Berkshire Regional Transit Authority

The Berkshire Regional Transit Authority (BRTA) fleet includes vans and chair cars specifically designed for passengers eligible for Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) services. These vehicles offer services from the starting point to the final destination, known as curb-to-curb service, with a focus on convenience at no extra cost.

Paratransit transportation services are available to assist individuals in reaching medical appointments, shopping centers, work, and school. Eligibility for these services depends on a person's mobility and functional ability to navigate the fixed route service. There are two types of eligibility:

Unconditional: Granted to individuals whose mobility prevents them from using the bus service for any trips.

Conditional: Granted to those who can use buses under certain circumstances but require paratransit service in specific conditions, such as inclement weather or barriers to a particular trip or bus.

For scheduling ADA or non-ADA rides, call (413) 499-2782, option 3.

ADA fares: Local (in town): \$2.50 • Local (in town + adjacent town): \$3.50

Systemwide (in town + 2 towns): \$7.50 • Systemwide (maximum fare): \$9

All ADA trips provide origin-to-destination service within the BRTA fixed route service area. To determine eligibility and apply for the service, visit <https://berkshirerta.com/spec.../paratransit-transportation/>

Community News & Events

Stockbridge Grange Dinner

On Sunday, February 18, the Stockbridge Grange will serve a takeout-only dinner at the Grange Hall, 51 Church Street, Stockbridge. The dinner entrée will be roast pork, with chocolate and lemon pies for dessert. Cost is \$15. PLEASE ORDER BY FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 16. To place an order, call (413) 243-1298 or (413) 443-4352. Pickup time is 12 to 1:30 pm. Please call if the weather is iffy.



Council on Aging

The Richmond/West Stockbridge COA Craft Group meets in the Town Offices Community Room at 10 am on the second Tuesday of each month. The next meeting will be on February 13 with a snow date of February 20 and will feature making Valentine Rose Boxes. Pre-register to reserve your space and materials by calling Heather at Richmond Town Hall, (413) 553-7793. The class

is free to residents of Richmond and West Stockbridge. It's a fun time—hope to see you there!

West Stockbridge Plant Exchange

The West Stockbridge Plant Exchange meets on the first Sunday of each month to exchange seeds, cuttings, plants, and advice. It's a great way to meet people in the community and exchange indoor and outdoor gardening knowledge. The next meeting will be on February 4 from 2 to 4 pm in the Community Room at the Town Offices. For further information, please contact Alisa Desmond at (561) 235-4392.

The Knitters Group

The Knitters Group meets every Wednesday from 2 to 4 pm in the Community Room at the Town Offices. All crafts are welcome.

Friends of the Library

The Friends of the Library Committee meets every second Wednesday of the month from 3:30 to 4:30 pm in the Community Room at the Town Offices. All are welcome.

Please send your notices for Community News & Events to the Local Yokel, P.O. Box 238, West Stockbridge, MA 01266, email info@thelocalyokel.org, or visit thelocalyokel.org.

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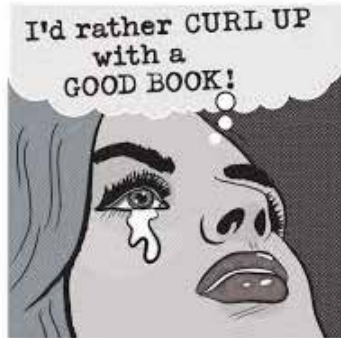
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Mon., Wed., Thurs., and Sat. 10 am–3 pm | Tues. and Fri. 2–6 pm | Sun. Closed



We look forward to seeing you soon!
Vicky, Rachel, Sarah, and Francesca

NEW ADULT FICTION

Davis, *The echo of old books*
McDermott, *Absolution*
Moore, *I am homeless if this is not my home*

NEW ADULT NONFICTION

Cheney, *Oath and honor*
Dederer, *Monsters: a fan's dilemma*
Hutchinson, *Enough*
Karl, *Tired of winning*
Maddow, *Prequel: an American fight against fascism*
Richardson, *Democracy awakening*
Sinclair, *How to say Babylon*
Vaillant, *Fire weather: a true story from a hotter world*

NEW DVDs

A Haunting in Venice; Living; Mission Impossible: Dead Reckoning; Oppenheimer



Scrapbook Questions/created by Paula Farrell TEST YOUR TRIVIA KNOWLEDGE!

1. In June, what did a New York development firm want to turn the Williamsville Inn into?
2. Which West Stockbridge resident raised funds from her lemonade stand to fight childhood cancer?
3. Did the Williamsville Inn ever actually become a drug treatment center?
4. What was the reason for the abutters' opposition to the center?

1. A drug treatment center
2. Ten-year-old Carley Sturges at Star Holly Farm
3. No
4. The abutters thought it would be a detriment to the neighborhood.



This program is supported in part by a grant from the West Stockbridge Cultural Council, a local agency which is supported by the Massachusetts Cultural Council, a state agency.

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History Quiz Answer:

Elijah Williams made the first request to separate the western part of Stockbridge in 1771. He owned the land around Williamsville and in the village center and then developed various mills along the river and sold them off. There is no record of what happened to his request. He later wrote another one, naming the town Queensboro. That also went nowhere. Perhaps it was because he insulted the local state representative from Stockbridge in the letter, calling him "too negligent to have done anything."

In January 1774, a complicated time in Massachusetts history, a formal petition was made to the General Court in January by Increase Hewins, along with other residents of West Center. The Boston Tea Party had occurred less than a month before. Parliament clamped down even more on the colonies with the Coercive Acts, essentially abolishing state government and closing the Port of Boston. Even town meetings required the governor's permission. Thomas Hutchinson was the acting governor and looking forward to a post somewhere else.

The General Court was restricted in any action without Hutchinson's permission; all town meetings were banned. (Coincidentally, the same day the petition was issued, Benjamin Franklin was being reprimanded by the Privy Council in London.) Forming "West Stockbridge" could not have been high on anyone's list, but some action was taken.

Despite the turmoil, on March 9, 1774, the General Court passed an act "incorporating the West Part of the Town of Stockbridge into the district named West Stockbridge." Taxes were to be apportioned, and we were allowed to have a town meeting to elect officers.

The boundaries were another matter. The eastern boundary was to be only 1.5 miles from the western border (New York State line). Although this border would have made a neat-looking square on a map, the town line would have ended somewhere down the middle of Maple Hill and extend on the west side of the Williams River. It would have included the farms and taverns in West Center, but our village center, Williams River, Shaker Mill Pond, Williamsville, and West Stockbridge Mountain would not be included! Clearly whoever drew the lines had never been in western Massachusetts.

Fortunately, the mistake was caught, and a second amended act was passed on June 17, 1774. This time the borders were set at 2.5 miles from the New York State line. Evidently someone had corrected the previous mistake at the General Court.

So, our actual town birthday has two official dates: March 9 and June 17. (Also, to complicate matters, other documents cite February 23, although no official document cites that date.) The first town meeting establishing the town government was held on July 4, 1774, a prescient date in history.



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Please check our website www.ahavathsholom for information about our Zoom services, events and updates.

See our new Marketplace section featuring a selection of books, craft items and art works by our members. A portion of each purchase will be donated by the synagogue to the Southern Berkshire area People's Pantry.

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WINTER PARKING BAN



The West Stockbridge "Winter Parking Ban" will be in effect from NOVEMBER 15TH to APRIL 1ST between 11pm and 7am for all Town roads. Violation of the ban may result in a \$25 fine for parking in a prohibited area as well as a \$50 fine for impeding snow removal. The vehicle may also be towed at the owner's expense for impeding snow removal.

Municipal parking is located on Hotel Street and Center Street. Snow removal in these areas will be between 7am-8am.

Thank you for your cooperation

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Town Government Boards and Commissions, Phone Directory, and Office Hours

Town Offices Main Number (413) 232-0300 • Fax 232-7195

Animal Control	<i>John Drake</i>	464-2148		As Needed
Assessors Office	<i>Mary Stodden</i>	232-0300	ext. 303	Tues. 1-5 pm; Thurs. 9 am-1 pm
Board of Health	<i>Earl Moffatt</i>	232-0300	ext. 314	Fri. 9 am-4 pm, or by appt.
Select Board	<i>Kathleen Kersey Andy Krouss Andy Potter</i>	232-0300	ext. 319	
Town Administrator	<i>Marie Ryan</i>			Mon.-Thurs. 7 am-3 pm Fri. 7-11 am
Building Inspector	<i>Brian Duval</i>	232-0300	ext. 313	Leave Message for Inquiries
Conservation Commission	<i>Kathy Korte</i>	232-0300	ext. 300	Leave Message for Inquiries
Council on Aging	<i>John Zick</i>	232-0300	ext. 340	Leave Message for Inquiries
Emergency Management	<i>Louis Oggiani</i>	528-2175		
Fire Department	<i>Steve Traver</i>	911 or 329-7153 (non-emergency)		Mon. 6:30-9 pm
Highway Department	<i>Curt G. Wilton</i>	232-0305		Leave Message for Inquiries
Library	<i>Rachel Alter</i>	232-0300	ext. 308	Mon., Wed., Thurs., and Sat. 10 am-3 pm; Tues. and Fri. 2-6 pm; closed Sun.
Police Department	<i>Marc Portieri</i>	911 or 232-8500 (non-emergency)		24 hours, 7 days/week
Post Office	<i>Colleen A. Wich</i>	232-8544		Lobby: 7 am-7 pm; 7 days/week; Window: Mon.-Fri. 9 am-4:30 pm; Sat. 9 am-12 noon
Sewer & Water Commission	<i>Michael Buffoni</i>	232-0309		
Town Accountant	<i>Elaine Markham</i>	232-0300	ext. 317	Leave Message for Inquiries
Town Clerk	<i>Ronni Barrett</i>	232-0300	ext. 300	Tues. & Thurs. 1:30-3:30 pm
Town Collector	<i>Kelli Bradbury</i>	232-0300	ext. 302	Tues. 1-5 pm; Wed. 7 am-12 pm; Thurs. 1-6 pm
Town Historian	<i>Robert Salerno</i>	232-4465		
Town Treasurer	<i>Benjamin Gelb</i>	232-0300	ext. 316	Tues. 9 am-4 pm
Transfer Station	<i>Wayne Cooper</i>	232-0307		Tues. & Thurs. 10 am-6 pm and Sat. 8 am-6 pm
Tree Warden	<i>Andrew Fudge</i>	212-9206		
Veterans Agency	<i>Tom Beasley</i>	528-1580		
Zoning Board of Appeals	<i>C. Randolph Thunfors</i>	232-0300	ext. 300	

Official Town Government Website: weststockbridge-ma.gov • Community and Business Website: visitweststockbridge.com

Terri Jo Dixon
weaving



Needlepoint project
begun by Madeline Metz and
completed by Phyllis Weiss,
pictured here holding the
needlepoint. Photo by
Terri Jo Dixon

Lucy Bellville
wool applique



Sue Coxon
knitting
socks



Meet the Knitters ... and More!

By John Parker

For almost two decades, a group of women who call themselves the Knitters have met weekly to work on their projects, to maintain valued friendships, and to socialize. They are not all knitters; some do needlepoint, applique, cross-stitch, weaving, and even scrapbooking. It's a diverse group by age, faith, and occupation, yet all share a devotion to handcrafts and enjoy the conversation and each other's company. The Knitters meet every Wednesday from 2 to 4 pm in the Community Room of the Town Offices, and they invite anyone interested in fiber arts and other crafts to join them.

Carol
Kuller
wearing
reader's
wrap



June Biggs
knitting

Debra Rutigliano
cross stitch



Phyllis Weiss
needlepoint



Paula Farrell
scrapbooking



Liam O'Gara with
grandmother Pat
Kujawski's knitting

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S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29		

February Calendar of Events	2/2			Groundhog Day
	2/4	Plant Exchange meeting	2-4 pm	Community Room, Town Offices
	2/7	Knitters Group	2-4 pm	Community Room, Town Offices
	2/10	Lunar New Year		
	2/12	Select Board meeting	6 pm	Town Offices, 21 State Line Road and Zoom
	2/13	Council on Aging Craft Group meeting	10 am	Community Room, Town Offices
	2/14	Ash Wednesday		
	2/14	Valentine's Day		
	2/14	Knitters Group	2-4 pm	Community Room, Town Offices
	2/14	Friends of the Library meeting	3:30 pm	Community Room, Town Offices
	2/15	*** Deadline for the next <i>Local Yokel</i> ***		
	2/16	Finance Committee	9 am	Town Offices, 21 State Line Road
	2/16	WSHS nature talk with Beaverland author Leila Philip	7 pm	Old Town Hall, 9 Main Street
	2/18	Stockbridge Grange takeout dinner		See Community News for details
	2/19	Presidents' Day: Town Offices closed		
	2/21	Knitters Group	2-4 pm	Community Room, Town Offices
	2/23	Finance Committee & Select Board Joint Budget Meeting	9 am	Town Offices, 21 State Line Road
	2/23	Library Trustees meeting	5 pm	Town Offices, 21 State Line Road
	2/24	Dog Park Committee Community Forum	3 pm	Town Offices, 21 State Line Road
	2/26	Select Board meeting	6 pm	Town Offices, 21 State Line Road and Zoom
	2/28	Knitters Group	2-4 pm	Community Room, Town Offices
	2/28	Select Board Rent Control Board Public Hearing	6 pm	Town Offices, 21 State Line Road and Zoom
	2/29	Finance Committee FY25 Budget Public Hearing	6 pm	Town Offices, 21 State Line Road